

*M. Ginnell*

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A PORTRAIT GALLERY OF PHYSICIANS  
THE COLLECTION IN THE ARMY MEDICAL LIBRARY

By HAROLD WELLINGTON JONES, COL., M.C., U.S.A.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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FIG. 12. WILLIAM C. GORGAS (1854-1920).





[From Fernelius: *Universa medicina*, Geneva, 1679.]

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LONG before his eyes wander among the books, the visitor to the Army Medical Library is conscious, as he enters the vast reading room, of many faces looking down upon him from on high. Some thirty years ago when I first saw these portraits I was timidly aware, as a budding aspirant for a commission, of the fierceness of the gaze of some of them, and could indeed thank my stars that yonder old gentleman in the cocked hat and epaulets was not to have my destiny in his keeping. If he count them, the visitor will find some score of personages of greater or lesser fame who have long been immortalized on canvas to be hung, most of them "skyed" as our artists put it, under varying degrees of illumination for the speculation of posterity.

Many readers, I dare say, give these

likenesses no second thought, perhaps indeed a fair share of them, immersed in those lusty tomes for which all libraries are famous, are quite unconscious of the piercing glances from the frames—are perhaps unaware of the displeasure of many a look when too much noise comes from the reading room. Who are these men? Are they Titans or nonentities placed there by those who had no other way of dealing with them? Some peer out dimly, their lineaments scarce discernible, as if afraid of recognition, while others have countenances lighted with shafts of gold which the setting sun has seemingly endowed with life. Is the likeness before me a prized portrait by an artist of note, or is it perhaps the work of some hack unknown to fame? Let us examine them and discover if we may what the portraits tell us.

WILLIAM SHIPPEN

Here in a corner of the huge room is our first acquaintance. His pink and white countenance, quite free from

care, looks down over ruffled linen of impeccable whiteness. Nevertheless the face shows a man of force and a lofty purpose reveals itself as we look at his likeness. William Shippen must have been good to know.

William Shippen was Director General of the Military Hospitals of the Continental Army, and was born in Philadelphia in 1736. As I look at him I realize he was the same age as my great-great-grandfather who commanded a Company at Bunker Hill. Did they ever meet? Who knows? Fate decreed that I shall not know the face of my great-great-grandfather who lies on a hillside in a tiny New Hampshire village, while William Shippen's face lives forever. The portrait is a good copy of Gilbert Stuart's portrait of Shippen now in possession of the Shippen family. It was presented to the Library many years ago by Mrs. George E. Nitzsche of Pennsylvania. Wistar says of William Shippen: "His person was graceful, his manners polished, his conversation various, and the tones of his voice singularly sweet and conciliatory. In his intercourse with society he was gay without levity, and dignified without harshness or austerity." As one looks at his likeness this tribute is not difficult to believe.

#### JAMES CRAIK

The portrait hung next to William Shippen has the look of a Scotchman, and this observation I recorded one afternoon as I studied the faces in the Library, nor was I at all surprised to discover that James Craik was in truth born in Scotland. He is clean shaven after the fashion of his time, as was Shippen, and the small mouth denotes narrowness perhaps. Secretive he must have been I think, a man not easy to know. James Craik was Physician Gen-

eral of the Army, and he lived just over the river from Washington in Fairfax County, Virginia. The original portrait of which this is a copy hangs in Washington Lodge, Alexandria, Virginia.

Doctor Craik accompanied Washington in an expedition against the French and Indians in 1754, and attended the wounded Braddock a year later at Fort Duquesne. He was a warm friend of Washington's and after the war at the General's suggestion he removed to the neighborhood of Mount Vernon. In 1798 when war was threatened with France he was appointed Physician General to the Army but held the position but a short time. Doctor Craik attended Washington in his last illness and was present when his General passed away. He himself died full of years and honors in 1814.

#### JAMES TILTON

We now look at James Tilton, whose portrait hangs hard by Doctor Craik's. Doctor Tilton was Physician and Surgeon General of the Army, and the dual title suggests an unwillingness to share honors with anyone. Indeed the flinty and uncompromising countenance that looks at me makes me feel like tendering the gentleman an apology for removing him from his golden frame. If we search for the name of the artist it will be in vain. The canvas was obtained in New York a century or so ago, but the artist's signature, if it existed, has long since been painted out in the restoration of the portrait, the gift of Mr. James Tilton of Wilmington, Delaware, a descendant, in 1875. There is no hint to be found anywhere of its being a copy of any existing likeness, and Doctor Thacher's book shows an entirely different portrait of Tilton. As one looks at the lean face, the thin lips, the cold blue eyes, one sees a man





FIG. 1. WILLIAM SHIPPEN (1736-1808).



FIG. 2. JAMES CRAIK (1730-1814).



FIG. 3. JAMES TILTON (1745-1822).



FIG. 4. JOSEPH LOVELL (1788-1836).



bold and decided, which indeed he was. Born in Delaware, graduated in the first class in the Medical School of Philadelphia, he entered his country's service in 1776, relinquishing a lucrative practice. Uncommonly successful in the practice of medicine, he was again called to the service of his country in 1812 as has been said. Thacher, quoting his friend Belloch in whose arms Tilton died, says of him: "In whatever view we may consider the character of Doctor Tilton we shall find many traits to distinguish him from other men. He was . . . an original; wholly unlike most other men in person, countenance, manners, speech, gesture and habits."

Doctor Tilton was President of the Society of the Cincinnati of Delaware, and it was hoped that the history of the portrait could be traced in some manner through this organization, but the effort has been without success and the origin of the likeness remains unknown.

#### JOSEPH LOVELL

Next we see General Lovell. A hundred years ago he founded the Army Medical Library, little dreaming of what a century would bring forth. Lovell's portrait has been copied in every instance I think where his features have been reproduced, but there are other likenesses of him in existence in the possession of his descendants. Lovell did not live long after he founded the Library—he died in the same year. His portrait by an unknown artist shows an alert, keen face, the face of a man of action. Lovell was in point of fact our first Surgeon General under definite planned legislative enactment, and from the time he took office in 1818 at the age of twenty-nine, until his death eighteen years later, he made history. His views on sanitation of more

than a hundred years ago are as sound as a dollar today. He revised and rewrote the Medical Department Regulations, was largely responsible for the reorganization of the Medical Corps in 1821, and at all times stood ready to staunchly defend his beloved branch of the service from aggression. He labored earnestly to secure increases of pay for medical officers and his efforts were ultimately successful. He banished the whiskey ration from the Army, he established boards to weed out the incompetents of the Medical Department. In the words of Harvey Brown, "In all his relations, whether as Christian philanthropist, profound scholar, skilful surgeon, or true-hearted gentleman, he was one of whom the medical staff may always be proud and the memory of whose good life may be written on every page of its history." Such was Lovell who founded the Army Medical Library one hundred years ago.

#### THOMAS LAWSON

The fifth portrait in the long line over the entrance to the Library Hall is Surgeon General Lawson. What a name to conjure with! Indeed I cannot look at him save in terror. From under the cocked hat a face arises from a mountain of gold braid, and he fastens upon me a gaze wherein are depicted indomitable will and persevering courage. The dark, deep-set eyes, the straight nose and the firm mouth show the measure of the man. Here is he who was too busy in the field in the Florida war to press his claims for the Surgeon Generalcy. When President Jackson finally appointed him to succeed General Lovell, a sigh of relief went up from those who feared the place would go to a civilian. General Lawson's portrait by F. J. Fisher is one

of the outstanding ones in the gallery. There is no mist about his countenance and he appears as he probably was, a fearless man who knew his rights and stood up for them whether in the field or at his desk. He was no stranger to battle for he even commanded a regiment in war.

General Lawson served as Surgeon General through the Mexican War and was still in that office at the outbreak of the Civil War, his tenure extending over a period of a quarter of a century. He died suddenly in May, 1861, having served as Surgeon General longer than any man in history. Quoting again from Harvey Brown: "He was the last of that gallant band of medical officers who had upheld the credit of the Corps . . . during the arduous campaigns of the second war with England. He had seen continuous service for forty-eight years and had wielded his vigorous pen in the office of the Surgeon General ever since the death of the lamented Lovell." How trenchant was that pen and how much the Medical Corps of today owes to Lawson can best be appreciated by reading his many published letters and reports and by a consideration of the legislation for which he was largely responsible. An example of his vigorous language, which by the way was never equivocal and which could well have come from that uncompromising face upon the wall, I cannot refrain from quoting. It concerned a man who, having failed on his examination for the Medical Corps, had attempted to secure the position by political preferment. Here was Thomas Lawson defending his beloved Medical Corps from the rape of the politicians. "Dr. . . . has been twice examined and in both instances *greatly failed* [*italics mine*], and from my own knowledge of him I am free to say that he can

never reach the lowest niche even on the standard of merit by the Army Medical Board." *Ecce quam bonum!*

CLEMENT A. FINLEY

The next portrait and the sixth in order is General Finley, undoubtedly one of the most striking in the gallery. From the splendid old frame looks out a fine figure of a man. Handsome he is, and his beautifully curled whiskers and beard just turning gray give him the look of an aristocrat among aristocrats. The eyes are stern, the face impassive and immobile, the shoulders narrow. Were he your ancestor you would be proud indeed, for who does not cherish beauty in those from whom he is sprung? The portrait is a really fine work by F. J. Fisher who painted Lawson, and it has been reproduced many times. As far as I am able to discover no other portrait of General Finley is in existence.

General Finley was made Surgeon General of the Army on the death of General Lawson in the Spring of 1861 and at the very outbreak of the Civil War. The appointment, for he was more than sixty years of age, was made undoubtedly on account of General Finley's being the senior officer of the Medical Corps. General Finley served less than a year and then retired, having erected in that period no imperishable monuments to his own genius. Yet I would gladly admit him to the company of my forbears.

JOSEPH K. BARNES

Now comes General Barnes, done by the same artist, Fisher. Surgeon General Barnes had been Acting Surgeon General during the absence of Surgeon General Hammond in the field in 1863, and when that officer was dismissed





FIG. 5. THOMAS LAWSON (1789-1861).



FIG. 6. CLEMENT A. FINLEY (1797-1879).



FIG. 7. JOSEPH K. BARNES (1817-83).



FIG. 8. CHARLES H. CRANE (1825-83).





from the Army by sentence of a court martial in 1864, he was made Surgeon General and served as such until 1882. General Barnes was responsible for the continuance of the collection of the Army Medical Museum started in the war by General Hammond, and for the detail of Doctor Billings on the duty of creating a great medical library. He also stood stoutly for the rights of the Medical Department as to the control of General Hospitals and Hospital Ships. Anyway, he convinced the Secretary of War (Mr. Stanton) who issued orders as to such control which still stand after more than seventy years. Thus was settled for all time the right of medical officers to command within their own sphere of action. Therefore we can overlook the lack of merit in the picture—to my mind his numerous photographs are far more pleasing—and remember that the man with the burnside whiskers was, despite his mild and somewhat pained expression, a man of action.

CHARLES H. CRANE

How shall I describe Crane who is next on view? Not Aaron, not Solomon, nor any but, perhaps, Moses can take rank with that bearded one whose facial adornment cascades from the infraorbital ridge to the fourth gold button of the uniform. He seems all beard, and as for the medals on his chest they are mostly hidden from view. The artist is L. P. Spinner. General Crane has been described as the "wheel horse of the Surgeon General's Office" by Pilcher, who credits General Barnes as in charge of the pyrotechnics of that bureau. General Crane had lived but a few months following his deserved elevation when he was gathered to his fathers.

JOHN MOORE

Here is a full length portrait of John Moore, Surgeon General from 1886 to 1890. It is a copy of a photograph that hangs behind a book cabinet, and I am sure from General Moore's crusty appearance he could not have been induced to sit for his portrait. The artist, like many another from Velasquez and Rembrandt down to our own times, failed to include his name and address and is now quite unknown. Colonel Moore was sixty years of age when his appointment came, much to the surprise of the Medical Corps. He had a good but not a brilliant war record although his administration was marked in two respects, instruction of troops in first aid and the creation of the Hospital Corps. General Moore had a reputation for geniality which, I am forced to record, his picture belies. There is certainly none of the swashbuckler about him, and we may be sure he did not live dangerously nor venture abroad in winter without overshoes and muffler!

GEORGE M. STERNBERG

If George M. Sternberg had never become Surgeon General of the Army his name would have endured. The portrait was presented by Mrs. Sternberg,—the artist, one Summers, who forbore according to his lights to indicate Sternberg's place among men of science, for there is no microscope set up in the background. The present generation, I think, can have no very keen appreciation of Sternberg's prestige at the close of the last century. His huge volume on Bacteriology with its 900 pages was standard, admitting for a time no rival. His work created a furor in the Medical Corps and there was a "revival of learning," so to speak, as aging medical officers went gaily in for

bacteriology and began staining tubercle bacilli at the kitchen sink. The study of bacteria became almost a cult and great was Sternberg's fame.

In 1892 the work was published. The first book off the press is in the Library—on the flyleaf: "To my wife from her loving husband, Geo. M. Sternberg." She was the devoted wife who was his biographer. Sternberg's position in the scientific world earned him the Surgeon Generalcy a year later. Soon after taking office he established the Army Medical School, an important step in the educational world of the Service. General Sternberg served through the Spanish-American War. The final honor he was to have connected with his name was the recommendation for the appointment of the Board for the Study of Yellow Fever in Cuba, with Walter Reed at its head.

General McCaw said of him in his eulogy at Sternberg's interment at Arlington that: "He was preeminently a useful man; one who exemplified the best of our American qualities,—a desire to work for the common good in any way that suggests itself."

ROBERT M. O'REILLY

The portrait of General Robert Maitland O'Reilly that looks down from the south wall is by Gerard Barry and was acquired in 1909. It is a somewhat fussy picture of a man in uniform, but is not a bad likeness of the first man to occupy the office of Surgeon General after it became a definite tenure for four years.

General O'Reilly was of some precocity, indeed I doubt if any member of the Medical Corps before or since has begun his service as a medical officer at such a tender age, for he was but nineteen when in 1864 he "went for a soldier" and became a medical cadet.

Thus he had Civil War service to his credit, but he did not lack for action in the field in his later years, and served in several expeditions against the Indians. He had also an excellent record as a physician, as a medical officer in several wars, and as Surgeon General. He died in 1913.

My one contact with him was to grasp a hand which dropped mine on the instant, as he greeted a dozen newly made medical officers as a matter of duty. I am sure he did not want us in his office nor did we wish terribly to be there, and to bandy words with our chief was far from our minds. Like laying cornerstones and washing beggars' feet on Maundy celebrations, the ceremony of greeting had to be gone through with like many another time-honored custom!

WILLIAM C. GORGAS

The portrait of General Gorgas impressed me when I saw it for the first time as an excellent likeness. The General is in his service uniform and ribbons and his profile stands out with startling distinctness. His face is careworn as if he were bearing the burdens of the world, which indeed he was. The painting was presented to the Library in 1921 by the Southern Society of Washington and the artist is Alexander Robertson James. The late Mrs. Gorgas was much pleased with the portrait, and at the time she first saw it her words were, "The profile is like Dr. Gorgas and so lifelike it startles me." The ceremonial of the presentation was elaborate and at the close the portrait was accepted for the Library by General Ireland, the Surgeon General, from the hand of Colonel Owen.

Gorgas lived through a great era even if he did not reach the allotted span of life. As a boy he saw the Civil



FIG. 9. JOHN MOORE (1826-1907).



FIG. 10. GEORGE M. STERNBERG (1838-1915)



FIG. 11. ROBERT M. O'REILLY (1845-1912).



FIG. 13. ROBERT FLETCHER (1823-1912).







War, in his maturity he took part in those momentous events leading to the liberation of alien races and he became the greatest sanitarian of his time despite efforts to discredit him. In this he shared the difficulties encountered by most of the great who are envied by the little. Quietly and unobtrusively he went on his gentle way, undisturbed by the venom of his critics, and when Death bade him stand and deliver he was a man unafraid. The great sanitarian died in London in 1920. Fitting tributes to his stirring life were the visit of King George V at his bedside and the conferring of Knighthood upon him, and finally his funeral at St. Paul's in London.

Gorgas needs no canvas and no monuments to his memory. Even as with the great Christopher Wren, they are all about us and indeed more enduring than structures of stone and steel. How many living owe their lives to him! How many unborn will owe their existence to his work! To have been associated with him has been a privilege for many to look upon with pride, and the Library, too, may well be proud of that face in the gallery.

#### ROBERT FLETCHER

The portrait of Robert Fletcher is generally regarded as the finest in the gallery, and was painted by Wilton Lockwood. The painting was presented to the Library by a large number of Fletcher's friends, including many from the Cosmos Club in Washington. It is an excellent likeness and shows Doctor Fletcher near the close of his life, a scholarly gentleman nearing ninety who looks out upon the world as if his convictions were unshaken and his destiny well and happily decided. The pose, the coloring and the expression are splendidly achieved.

Robert Fletcher was a great character. Like Billings, he was an institution. Born in Bristol, England, in 1823, at a tender age he entered the Bristol Medical School and in due time was articled to Surgeon Henry Clark for some years. He became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1844 and shortly after that he came to the United States, settling in Ohio, and serving some years later as a surgeon in the Civil War. After the War he came to Washington to be in the Provost Marshal's office, and in 1876 his connection with the Surgeon General's Library began. His subsequent career for the following thirty-six years until his death, and his association with the Index Catalogue and Index Medicus are matters of history. Osler speaks of him as "a courtly gentleman of the old school, having a rare gift for friendship."

Doctor Fletcher was a delightful raconteur and his reminiscences of the famous men he had met and of the times in which he had lived were a rare treat to his listeners. It was said of him also that no man ever aged more gracefully than he, and indeed the old man died in harness, as he had lived, treating his infirmities at the end as he always had treated them, "with contempt." His writings, while few, covered a broad front and evidence a wide culture, concerning themselves with the history of medicine, with art, poetry and the humanities; his tastes in literature as in many other things were catholic. His portrait somehow conveys the idea of frailty. Those who remember him recall him as virile and sturdy, a man among men.

#### PHILIP SYNG PHYSICK

Here is a big man, an eminent American—Philip Syng Physick, and the por-

trait is by Benjamin West, the time *circa* 1800. Physick's grandson in a letter to Doctor Billings nearly fifty years ago says it was presented to the Library by Thomas Sully of Philadelphia. It shows a man grave, almost ascetic. The face is sensitive, that of a scholar, a man given to much thinking. It is said of him that he wore gold buttons and a queue to the last—a powdered gentleman of the old school!

It was a surprise to me that I knew so little of Physick, but that was due to a New England ancestry and an education which enshrined Warren and Bigelow and Jackson to the exclusion of men who, like Physick, could have walked in the company of Astley-Cooper, Abernethy and the Bells. Physick chose to forsake John Hunter and the London hospitals, and he probably chose wisely. It was in May, 1792, that he took his degree in Edinburgh, and I shook the dust from his thesis just now to read his "*Dissertatio medica inauguralis de apoplexia*" in order to better understand the man. It is dedicated to his teacher John Hunter, "*viro optimis moribus*" of his early days, and the Latin is no man's but his own. He came back to Philadelphia, and as Rush is said to have become the father of American medicine, so Physick held a niche along with him as the father of American surgery. In time he secured almost everything his heart could desire, wealth, fame, almost unparalleled professional success; and yet he lived a lonely life with but few intimates. The first American to be elected to the French Royal Academy of Medicine, he was also a Fellow of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London. He cut John Marshall for the stone in 1831, and just before his end at seventy he performed a cataract operation most beautifully!

At the expense of much time and effort and the sending away of photographs of Physick's portrait, I have endeavored to secure information as to when and where it was executed. Attempts to trace the painting to England where West did most of his work have been in vain. West himself was born in Pennsylvania in 1728 and began to paint at the age of fifteen. His early career became legendary, thanks to his romantic biographer Galt and to West himself. He was, without doubt, the first American painter to study art in Italy, where he went in his early thirties and where he remained for three years until his arrival in England in 1763 for a brief visit. The visit was, however, for fifty-seven years, ending only with the painter's death. West became immensely popular in England and eventually became historical painter to George III, as well as inheriting the Presidency of the Royal Society in succession to Reynolds. Among his pupils were Gilbert Stuart, Sully and John Trumbull. Notwithstanding West's great vogue his paintings today have little historical interest and his pictures are not held in high repute as great productions. Nevertheless the portrait of Physick I would place among his best works.

#### WILLIAM BEAUMONT

William Beaumont's picture is a copy of the portrait by Chester Harding which was made of Beaumont during his later years in Saint Louis. It hangs in the Beaumont Room in the Library of the Medical School of Washington University. Beaumont's portrait evidences a man of set and serious purpose, and reminds one of a statesman in his Websterian character and pose. The copy is an excellent and a practically exact reproduction of the original, but

how it came to the Library and by whom it was painted is not on record.

The Army claims Beaumont as does Saint Louis, indeed all America claims this immortal who first peered into a living, functioning stomach. Even he could not prevent the lying self-styled physiologists of a later date from telling us falsely the true role of the stomach, nor the equally false views of those who would have us believe that diluting gastric juice with water during meals is harmful and that a noggin of mountain dew will remove the mucous membrane.

William Beaumont came into the Army as a Surgeon's mate during the War of 1812, and he resigned three years later to enter private practice. In 1820 he was back in the Army again. In 1822, thanks to a passion for duck dinners enjoyed by the French Canadian St. Martin which resulted in the accidental discharge of a shotgun at one yard, the charge entering the hunter's body, Beaumont was enabled to revolutionize the study of gastric digestion. The permanent gastrostomy established at the expense of St. Martin's ribs, diaphragm and lung, while crudely performed was a notable success. Beaumont spent several years of his life running races with his subject who was generally not around when wanted. During one of his absences in the Canadian wilds St. Martin acquired a wife and child, but that did not deter Beaumont, and with the patience of a Job he kept following St. Martin and looking through the window for several years longer.

In 1824 Beaumont sent his report of St. Martin to Surgeon General Lovell, and received from him a highly appreciative letter. In this letter the Surgeon General made some suggestions of value concerning future experimenta-

tion, and showed his keen interest in the work Beaumont was doing. In 1825 General Lovell wrote Beaumont that he would be transferred to an eastern post in order that his experiments could be better conducted, and a few months later Beaumont was at Fort Niagara, New York, accompanied by St. Martin. Here it was that St. Martin went A.W.O.L.

Throughout his lifetime General Lovell exhibited the greatest sympathy for and helpfulness in Beaumont's work. Not so General Lawson, whose thin lips and down-turned mouth proclaim him uncompromising either as friend or enemy. Jesse Myer<sup>1</sup> in his book concludes that Beaumont had aroused jealousy in the breast of General Lawson by the favors and attentions accorded the great experimenter at the hands of his good friend Lovell, who permitted Beaumont to take leave of absence and to change his station as occasion demanded in the interests of science.

It was not long therefore before it became evident from orders issued that Beaumont was no longer in favor with the administration, and at the end of 1839 he resigned, but his resignation was under pressure as was shown in his memorial to President Van Buren. Beaumont justly complained in his memorial that after twenty-four years of faithful service, and in his fifty-sixth year, he found himself rudely thrust from the public service, and he asked to be restored to his place as a commissioned officer in the Army. Beaumont however was never reinstated, and after many acrimonious statements, both oral and written, he congratulated himself upon having escaped service under the then chief of the Medical

<sup>1</sup> Myer, J. S., *Life and Letters of Dr. William Beaumont*. St. Louis, Mosby, 1912.



Department, General Lawson, and sincerely commiserated his associates in the Army who remained subject to "his caprice and tyranny, the natural fruits of ignorance and vanity." A man would surely be a fool who would attempt to add anything to clarify the opinion just expressed.

After his final separation from the Army in 1839, Beaumont continued practice in Saint Louis, and long afterward in the cholera epidemic in 1849 he rendered unselfish service to all, dying in 1853. Beaumont's enduring monument in the Army is, as is well known, the Army General Hospital in El Paso, Texas, named in his honor.

THOMAS G. MOWER

One of the finest portraits in the gallery is that of Thomas G. Mower. Unfortunately there is no record of the artist who painted it nor of how it came into the possession of the Library. The painting is remarkable for the richness and freshness, indeed the ruddiness of the colors. Doctor Mower has a fine alert face and he is dressed in the heavily gold encrusted uniform of his day. Recently it was discovered that the beautiful portrait was almost ruined by the cracking and curling up of the paint. A Washington artist undertook the task of restoring the painting, and has done it so successfully that hardly a trace of the injury sustained is visible.

Thomas G. Mower was a notable officer of the Medical Corps, more notable indeed than some of our Surgeon Generals. He entered the Medical Department as a surgeon's mate during the second war with England, at the age of twenty-two, and was in the battles of Chippewa, Lundy's Lane and Fort Erie. He played an important part in selecting the officers of the Medical

Corps over a period of more than twenty years, having served on every medical board for the examination of candidates except one, convened during that time. For more than two score years he served the Army with distinction. Both Surgeon General Lovell and Surgeon General Lawson spoke of his services in the highest terms, and the latter stated to the Secretary of War in 1854, that: "To him the Medical Staff owes much of its present efficiency and reputation, and it is hoped the influence of his example will not be lost."

It is well to reflect at times upon the achievements for good of those modest and quiet souls who have preceded us in this world. Doctor Mower's portrait is a reminder that we of the present owe much to the solid virtues of an earlier generation.

BENJAMIN F. BARKER

At the end of the west wall is a portrait of a man with reddish side whiskers and cheeks as pink as if they came from a rouge box. This is the renowned Benjamin F. Barker, painted by J. H. Lazarus in 1874. Until the picture was cleaned and restored recently it was difficult to appraise its merits. The high color of Doctor Barker's face makes the portrait remarkable and decidedly differentiates it from all the others in the gallery, and the delicacy of the colors may account for the difficulties encountered in its reproduction.

Benjamin F. Barker was a New Englander, born in 1818, and a graduate of Bowdoin. After a European education, largely in Paris, he returned to America in 1845. He entered practice in New York City in 1850. He was one of the founders of the New York Medical College and was on the staff of Bellevue Hospital until his death in 1891. His career was one of the most notable



FIG. 14. PHILIP SYNG PHYSICK (1768-1837).



FIG. 15. WILLIAM BEAUMONT (1785-1853).



FIG. 16. THOMAS G. MOWER (1790-1853).



FIG. 17. BENJAMIN F. BARKER (1818-91).





in the annals of American medicine, and it has been said of him that no American physician save Holmes had so many and such varied friendships. He was an intimate of Thackeray and Dickens and often visited them. As a consultant in obstetrics he was without a rival in his generation. John S. Emmet says of him that "he had a disposition on which the sun never set," which aptly describes his agreeable and open character.

One of the peculiar events of Barker's career was that in his later years he was the subject of a virulent personal attack inspired by envy on the part of those less successful than he, and the claims made for him that he was a graduate of the University of Paris Medical School were disputed. Barker had to leave Paris for personal reasons before the end of his term, and it was said of him that he did not apply for his degree and believed it had never been granted. Some years later his friends assured him that his diploma had been issued.

Although the controversy was said to have been cleared up and decided in Doctor Barker's favor, the fact remains that he apparently never submitted and defended the required thesis for the degree. A careful search of the University of Paris theses, of which the Library possesses a complete set since the French Revolution, fails to show his name. Before his death this distinguished physician was honored with degrees from a number of European and British Universities, including the seldom bestowed D.C.L. of Edinburgh.

#### JOHN HUNTER

The portrait of John Hunter is a copy of the original by Sir Joshua Reynolds in the possession of the Royal

College of Surgeons. Other copies are also to be seen in the National Gallery in London and at Oxford. The portrait is a famous one and shows the subject in reverie, a rare pose with John Hunter. A number of well-known engravings have been made of this likeness of Hunter, and the Library has several copies of these.

John Hunter and his older brother William were among the most famous medical men of the eighteenth century, and of the two John was, by common consent including his own, the leader. He early refused most heartily to be stuffed with Latin and Greek, and got his education by his own efforts through long and patient toil and observation. He was a pupil of Pott at Saint Bartholomew's, served a term in the British Army in Portugal, and when he was in his early thirties came to London to practice. Jenner, Astley Cooper, Abernethy, Physick and many other famous men were his pupils. He had a large income for those days but spent little on himself.

Hunter dissected almost everything in the animal kingdom including Bengal tigers, and he founded a museum of anatomy which became famous throughout the world. After his death it was acquired by the Royal College of Surgeons of London through funds appropriated by the British Parliament.

Hunter was impatient, often rude and overbearing, but was candid and aboveboard; those who dealt with him were seldom in doubt as to where they stood. He read little, in fact he had almost no booklearning, nor indeed could he write for publication without help from others. As an investigator and as an original thinker he was without a peer in his time, indeed he has had few equals since. Perhaps his most famous original work was his treatment of

aneurysm by tying the vessel involved. As is well known, Hunter died of coronary disease following a dispute with a member of the faculty of St. George's Hospital, thus fulfilling the prediction he had made years before that: "My life is in the hands of any rascal who chooses to annoy me, or to tease me."

#### BICHAT

High up and on a level with the second tier of bookstacks we see Bichat. No etching and no reproduction of this portrait can be found in our numerous likenesses of this famous man. The painting was presented to the Library thirty-five years ago by a Mr. Andrews, then the Director of the Corcoran Art School, and is apparently an original, although undoubtedly suggested by other likenesses. Among a large collection of likenesses, etchings, copies of portraits of Bichat in the Library, nothing resembling this picture has been discovered.

Bichat, the apt pupil of Desault and one of the great anatomists of all time, created an epoch in the history of medicine. Through empiricism and dogmatism from the time of Hippocrates and Galen and Harvey, medical science reached a truly scientific basis with Bichat. If you read the eulogies of the man by Larrey, by Roux and others you will not lack for encomiums upon the precocity and fertility of his genius. Bichat died early, and "if pitiless Death had not struck him down at the age of thirty," as wrote Napoleon, he would have been counted perhaps the greatest physician of his century. With Keats and Shelley he joined that rare company of youthful immortals. I can find no greater tribute to his enduring qualities that mark the great, than that penned by Miquel in his eulogy delivered in 1823: "C'est à Bichat qu'ap-

partient la gloire d'avoir tracé cette ligne, qui seule peut nous conduire à la vérité."

#### BERNARD J. D. IRWIN

The latest portrait acquired by the Library is that of Brigadier General Bernard John Dowling Irwin of the Medical Corps. This is a full-length portrait painted and presented by Amy McCormick, a Chicago artist who is General Irwin's daughter. General Irwin is in full-dress uniform, and the portrait is a striking one which never fails to attract attention.

Bernard John Dowling Irwin (a fighting doctor like General Wood) was born in Ireland in 1830 and served in action in the Civil War. At the Battle of Shiloh he established what is said to have been the first field tent hospital ever used in war. This attracted the attention of many foreign nations and the idea was soon adopted by armies the world over. All this is a matter of history and official record, and yet how soon are such things forgotten! In addition, General Irwin spent many years of arduous duty in the Southwest in the Indian campaigns and in the course of his career he led troops in action as well as performed surgical operations under conditions which would well give pause to the doctor of today. Read the story of his campaigns as related by him and his biographer Crimmins and you will realize faintly what it meant in those departed days to be an officer of the Medical Corps in frontier warfare. For distinguished bravery in action against the Indians General Irwin won the Congressional Medal of Honor, one of the first to so receive it. In addition he was distinguished in his profession, as his writings show. Not content with that, this versatile officer wrote papers upon meteorites and he discovered and



FIG. 18. JOHN HUNTER (1728-93).



FIG. 19. M.-F.-X. BICHAT (1771-1802).



FIG. 20. BERNARD J. D. IRWIN (1830-1917).



FIG. 21. SAMUEL G. MORTON (1799-1851).





presented to the Smithsonian Institution the Irwin meteorite.

General Irwin died in 1917, in his eighty-eighth year, after a life full of such adventures and distinctions as seldom fall to a disciple of Aesculapius. As I look at him I cannot forbear to quote from Cowper:

An honest man, close buttoned to the chin,  
Broadcloth without, and a warm heart  
within.

#### SAMUEL G. MORTON

Here is a man of skulls for he was in his day the most eminent craniologist in America. From the time he was thirty until he was in his mid-forties he collected and studied the skulls of a multitude of American Indians, Egyptians and Toltecs, and recorded his observations. To the close of his life a few years later at the early age of fifty-two he studied the human skull, and his collection in time grew to proportions undreamed of. From the Pyramids of Egypt, the Phoenician tombs of Malta and the Temples of the Incas came the dead in an unending procession. As time went on, so Gross relates, his office became "a place of skulls," until at the end he had nearly a thousand. At his death his collection went to the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. Retzius of Stockholm observed in 1847, in a letter to Morton: "You have done more for Ethnography than any living physiologist." Humboldt too was a warm admirer of Morton and showed this in his numerous letters. Agassiz soon after his arrival in America said of Doctor Morton's collection of skulls: "Nothing like it exists anywhere. The collection alone is worth a journey to America."

Samuel George Morton was born in 1799 and was educated in Philadelphia, a strict Quaker, graduating in medicine

in 1820. He later went to Edinburgh and received his doctorate in medicine there in 1823. His thesis for his doctor's degree was "De corporis dolore" and gives no indication of the bent of his mind. On the fly-leaf of the copy in the Library in Morton's handwriting is: "To Dr. Bradley with the best regards of his friend, the author." He dedicated his thesis to James Morton (his uncle), Philip Syng Physick and Joseph Parrish. The thesis itself is remarkable for its simplicity and dignity, and it is without the arts of declamation so frequently observed.

Morton was warm-hearted and generous, a kindly and gentle friend. He was a poet, too, of no mean pretensions. In looking over his numerous biographies I have been struck with the oft-uttered thought that the Quakers, by closing the bar and the pulpit to its members, inclined many brilliant men of Pennsylvania to the study of medicine, and that this possibly was responsible for Morton's choice.

His fame as an ethnographer and as an anatomist perhaps overshadowed his professional talents, but he was widely known as a skilled practitioner and had a large practice. His published works, numerous indeed, are practically all in the realm of ethnology and craniology.

His portrait hangs next to Billings' and the artist is unknown. Doctor Morton is said to have been above the medium height, of large frame and somewhat stooped. His face was oval, his features prominent and his hair and complexion fair. The portrait shows in a marked degree a thoughtful, dignified and gentlemanly expression, the face of a thinker and scholar.

#### WILLIAM A. HAMMOND

Hung in the well and opposite the

second floor of the Library building is the huge, more than life-size canvas of William A. Hammond. It was received more than a dozen years ago apparently without any formality, and curiously enough neither the then Librarian nor anyone connected with the Library has any recollection as to how it came to be presented nor who painted it. However, it is quite certain that some member of Doctor Hammond's family made the gift.

The picture is a good example of that school of art which insists upon an assemblage of objects in the background and often in the foreground, lest the qualities of the subject be underestimated. Thus we see two large tomes upon which rests the General's right hand, while the left firmly grasps a sword. Are the books the then unborn *Medical History of the Civil War* perhaps? In the near background is a sitting Buddha, and as the books proclaim the erudition of the man, so perhaps the statuette suggests the Nirvana he was certainly not destined to reach. Far in the background is a shadowy Hygeia. To me the picture is mostly interesting for the things it contains which are unrelated to the figure in uniform.

Surgeon General Hammond, who was appointed the Chief of the Medical Department during the early days of the Civil War, was a brilliant man, an organizer and a masterful politician. A good hater he undoubtedly was, and enemies he made without number. His dismissal from the Army by sentence of a court martial in 1864 was undoubtedly a miscarriage of justice and was due to the uncontrolled passions and prejudices engendered by the struggle. Far from ruining General Hammond, it did nothing of the kind. He became a very successful practitioner in Wash-

ington and was later (1878) vindicated and his dismissal from the Army voided by Congress.

Dr. Hammond specialized in mental diseases and was a busy writer. He was the author of "A Treatise on Insanity" which is interesting reading even to-day, more than fifty years after it appeared. For many years he lectured upon his specialty in several of the medical schools of New York City where he was in practice. In 1888 he moved to Washington, D. C. where he practiced actively until his death in 1900. His greatest achievement perhaps is his establishment of the Army Medical Museum during the Civil War. All in all he was undoubtedly one of the dominating personalities of his time.

#### GEORGE A. OTIS

In the office of the Librarian hangs a small portrait only 20 by 18 inches, but it is by the famous Sully. Here is no man invested with the panoply of war nor even some pallid genius staring out over a billow of shirt front. The portrait is that of a twelve-year-old boy whose gravely inquiring face looks down upon me as I write these lines. It is a beautiful portrait and one that seldom fails to evoke inquiry from the casual visitor. This is George A. Otis, and he was I think a real darling of the gods. The portrait was painted upon wood about 1843 and the colors are remarkable for their delicacy. Unfortunately we do not have any record of the manner in which this portrait came into the possession of the Library, but it was undoubtedly presented by some member of the Otis family. Nothing in Sully's biography gives any clue, and as he is said to have painted some 2600 works during his life, most of them portraits, identification becomes the more difficult.



FIG. 22. WILLIAM A. HAMMOND (1828-1900).



FIG. 23. GEORGE A. OTIS (1830-81).



FIG. 24. THE UNKNOWN.



FIG. 25. JOHN S. BILLINGS (1838-1913).





Thomas Sully was born in England near the end of the eighteenth century, but he grew up in America where he spent the last eighty years of his life except for his intervals of study in England. He was well known as an historical painter, and was at first influenced to some degree by Benjamin West. It was as a painter of portraits, however, that he achieved lasting fame. Sully even painted Queen Victoria in 1837 on her accession to the British throne. His works have been described as masterpieces of color. The freshness and beauty of the likeness of the young Otis which hangs in the Library testify to the soundness of Sully's reputation as a painter of portraits for the "cultured and discriminating."

George A. Otis was born in 1831 and lived but fifty years. He was a precocious lad and had his M.D. from Pennsylvania before he reached his majority. He early manifested a taste for literature and become co-editor of the *Virginia Medical Journal* with Dr. McCaw, the father of General Walter D. McCaw, one-time Librarian of the Surgeon General's Library. He served in the Civil War and after the close of the conflict entered the Regular Army Medical Corps. He is closely associated with the development of the Army Medical Museum and with the preparation of the "Medical and Surgical History of the Rebellion," on the Third Volume of which he was engaged at his untimely death. Colonel Otis was a foreign member of the Medical Society of Norway and a corresponding member of the Surgical Society of Paris. Although the present generation knows little of Otis, his name is illustrious and his fame secure.

#### THE UNKNOWN

The portrait of "The Unknown," as I have called him, piques my curiosity.

Some there are who are for banishing the subject to the cellar until he proclaim his identity. I dissent however, and have ordered him renovated and placed on view in the hope that in time we shall know him. After all, is it best that we know everything? Are not some puzzles, still unsolved, good for our minds? No clue to his identity is to be found, indeed he might be Jonathan Letterman but I am sure he is not. No living former Librarian can suggest his name and he is a mystery even to our Assistant Librarian who has been on intimate terms with him for thirty years. Perhaps, after all, he is my best excuse for the time and effort I have put upon this paper, certainly I do not wish coming generations to look at Doctor Fletcher's portrait, for example, and inquire who this old gentleman is!

We have seen the last of the portraits but one. Some have artistic merit, many have none. Each one, however, is a likeness of a man who has done something in the world, and it is fitting that we occasionally look up from the printed page to reflect upon what we owe to these worthies of an age that is past and gone.

#### JOHN S. BILLINGS

The last likeness we are to see is Billings' fine portrait by Cecilia Beaux which was painted in 1895 when he left the Library for good. As is well known the funds for this portrait were provided by Billings' numerous friends in this country and in England. Not long ago Miss Beaux wrote me in response to my request for some personal reminiscences of the sitter, and she has replied as follows:

It [the portrait] was one of the first commissions I had on my return to Phila-

delphia after my first trip to France for study—and I was very proud in having it entrusted to me. It was painted at my studio, 1710 Chestnut St. I fully felt that I was dealing with a great personality, very quiet and serious, as in the performance of duty. He never failed or would admit fatigue. I think he felt also that I would earnestly pursue what I had undertaken, and he would do all he could to assist me. His personality seemed to me of the noblest and highest, and of course the most direct and simple. I only remember this. I am sorry that all the details except the gown, have disappeared. I was completely absorbed in the power of the head, and all my zest and energy were turned towards dealing with such a splendid example. He had agreed to pose for his portrait and he did his part with appreciation and grace. This of course was an assistance to me, the deepest and most po-

tent, and it was his nature to contribute this unconsciously.

Doctor Billings never expressed an opinion about the portrait, but I think it possible that he took notice of the processes. I felt what an inspiration his character would be to any worker, and was thankful that I was permitted to observe for a short time the external evidence of such a spirit.

This portrait has been published many times but I ask you to look at it again. You may admire the figure or you may not. You may think he wears his clothes well or ill: you cannot but praise the rich and beautiful coloring. What I see always is Billings' face, his brow, his deep-set eyes. I see Billings the man of mighty mind and I think of that oft-quoted line: "I shall not look upon his like again."

